

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00111 251425Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 111

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, WA
SUBJ: NAMIBIA - TURNHALLE RALLY AND DISTURBANCE IN KATATURA

1. SUMMARY: ON JAN 21 THE DEMOCRATIC TURNHALLE ALLIANCE,
WITH THE AID OF A DANCE BAND AND 2000 KGS OF MEAT, ATTRACTED
4000 PEOPLE TO WHAT HAS BEEN BILLED AS THE LARGEST POLITICAL
MEETING EVER HELD IN NAMIBIA. IN THE EVENING FOLLOWING THE
MEETING LIMITED VIOLENCE BROKE OUT IN THE BLACK TOWNSHIP
OF KATATURA. END SUMMARY

2. ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON, JAN 21, THE DEMOCRATIC TURNHALLE
ALLIANCE (DTA) STAGED WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED THE "LARGEST
POLITICAL MEETING EVER HELD IN NAMIBIA" IN WINDHOEK'S
BLACK TOWNSHIP OF KATATURA. ONE RELIABLE OBSERVER TOLD US
THAT THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY AN ESTIMATED 4000 PERSONS,
INCLUDING A "REMARKABLE NUMBER OF WHITES", WHO WOULD NOT
NORMALLY VENTURE INTO KATATURA. NINE OF THE ELEVEN
DTA ETHNIC PARTY LEADERS ADDRESSED THE MEETING, MANY
OF THEM IN RELATIVELY OBSCURE NATIVE LANGUAGES,
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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00111 251425Z

NECESSITATING LENGTHY AND CUMBERSOME TRANSLATION. OF
PARTICULAR NOTE WAS AN ADDRESS BY HERERO LEADER AND
DTA PRESIDENT CLEMENS KAPUUNU, IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED
CONFIDENCE THAT MOST COUNTRIES WOULD EVENTUALLY
RECOGNIZE AN INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA. KAPUUNU ADDED THAT
DURING A VISIT TO NEW YORK IN NOV 1977, "OTHER
AFRICAN STATES" HAD URGED HIM TO ACCEPT INDEPENDENCE.

DIRK MUDGE, DTA CHAIRMAN, REPORTEDLY USED HIS ADDRESS TO URGE THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVT AND THE ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL TO MOVE SWA QUICKLY TO INDEPENDENCE. OVAMBO CHIEF MINISTER CORNELIUS NDJOBA TOLD THE CROWD THAT SWAPO SHOULD BE SEEN "NOT AS A FREEDOM ORGANIZATION BUT A MURDER ORGANIZATION".

3. ALTHOUGH THE AFRIKAANS PRESS REPORTED THAT THE LARGE CROWD LOUDLY APPLAUDED SPEAKERS, INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS TERMED THE CROWD "INTERESTED" RATHER THAN ENTHUSIASTIC. THE LARGE TURNOUT WAS ACHIEVED WITH THE HELP OF EXTENSIVE PRE-PUBLICITY, AND AN ACCOMPANYING AFTERNOON COOKOUT PREPARED FOR 5000 PEOPLE. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THIS INCLUDED 2000 KGS OF BEEF, 10,000 BREADROLLS, AND "METERS OF SAUSAGES." A DANCE BAND ALSO HELPED TO DRAW CROWDS. THE WINDHOEK SWAPO OFFICE TOLD US THAT THE GENERAL POPULATION OF KATATURA WAS GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT A PUBLIC FEAST RATHER THAN A POLITICAL MEETING WAS TO BE HELD, AND AS A RESULT THE OFTEN-HUNGRY RESIDENTS FLOCKED TO THE SCENE. THE OFFICE CLAIMED THAT MANY PEOPLE AT THE MEETING WERE NOT FROM KATATURA BUT WERE DRIVEN IN FROM OTHER NEARBY AREAS. JOURNALISTS ATTRIBUTED THE LARGE TURNOUT TO A COMBINATION OF PUBLICITY AND LACK OF ANYTHING ELSE TO DO ON A SATURDAY AFTERNOON IN KATATURA. WHILE THE CROWD WAS NOT ENTHUSIASTIC, NEITHER WAS IT HOSTILE TO THE SPEAKERS. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 CAPE T 00111 251425Z

4. POLITICAL OBSERVERS IN WINDHOEK REGARD THE RALLY AS THE KICKOFF OF THE DTA'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SURPRISE AT THE EXTRAVAGANCE AND OBVIOUS EXPENSE INVOLVED IN THIS FIRST MAJOR EFFORT. DTA LEADERS WOULD NOT COMMENT ON WHERE THE FUNDS FOR THE RALLY COME FROM. THE DTA OBVIOUSLY REMAINS WELL FINANCED, HOWEVER, DESPITE THEIR BREAK FROM THE NATIONAL PARTY.

5. ON SATURDAY EVENING, FOLLOWING THE RALLY, LIMITED VIOLENCE BROKE OUT IN KATATURA FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN A YEAR. ACCORDING TO AFRIKAANS PRESS REPORTS, SEVERAL VEHICLES WERE STONED AND ONE WAS SET ON FIRE. THERE WERE ALSO REPORTEDLY STABBINGS AND OTHER MINOR INCIDENTS OF ARSON. PROPERTY DAMAGE, HOWEVER, WAS MINIMAL AND NO ONE WAS SERIOUSLY INJURED. ONE WINDHOEK JOURNALIST TOLD US THAT THESE PRESS REPORTS TENDED TO OVER-DRAMATIZE MINOR INCIDENTS. WHILE MOST PRESS REPORTS ATTRIBUTED THE DISTURBANCE TO SWAPO SUPPORTERS, THE SWAPO OFFICE TOLD US THAT IT WAS "DIFFICULT TO MAKE OUT WHO STARTED THE VIOLENCE",

AND THAT IT MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED BY
"ENEMIES OF SWAPO" WHO WANTED "TO MAKE SWAPO SEEM
LIKE A VIOLENT MOVEMENT".
BOWDLER

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